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Introduction

- Plaintiff TIMUR GEFFE ("GEFFE"), alleges as follows, all on information 1. and belief, which allegations GEFFE believes will have evidentiary support after the opportunity for full investigation and discovery. GEFFE brings all causes of action against Defendant CREDIT INVESTIGATION AND ARBITRATION ("CIA") individually and/or on behalf of a class of similarly situated persons.
- Additionally, GEFFE brings the third cause of action against Defendant CIA 2. individually and/or on behalf of the general public.
- GEFFE is one of thousands of Americans who, during the past five years, 3. have placed their trust and money in the hands of CIA. This allegation is made based on assertions made by Defendant CIA on its Internet web site at "http://www.cia-credit.org/," and other sources.
- Defendant CIA engages in a wide variety of illegal business practices. 4.
- While Defendant CIA engages in a number of practices that are illegal, some 5. of which are outlined in this Complaint as they apply to GEFFE, this Complaint focuses on Defendant's charging or receiving of money or other valuable consideration for the performance of a service that the Defendant agreed to perform for Plaintiffs, including GEFFE, which was not fully performed, in violation of the Credit Repair Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679(c)(b).
- TIMUR GEFFE, ("Plaintiff"), by Plaintiff's attorneys, brings this action to 6. challenge the actions of CREDIT INVESTIGATION AND ARBITRATION, ("Defendant"), with regard to Defendants to engaging in actions prohibited by the Credit Repair Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679 et. seq. ("CROA"), and this conduct caused Plaintiff damages.

Class Action Complaint

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- **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**
- Jurisdiction of this Court arises pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, 15 U.S.C. § 7. 1679h, and 28 U.S.C. § 1367 for any supplemental state law claims.
- This action arises out of Defendant's violations of the Credit Repair 8. Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679 et. seq. (CROA).
- Because Defendant does business within the State of California, personal 9. jurisdiction is established.
- Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391. 10.

PARTIES

- Plaintiff is a natural person who resides in the City of Murrieta, County of 11. Riverside, State of California and is a "consumer" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1679b(1).
- Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendant is a 12. company operating from the City of Santa Rosa, County of Sonoma, State of California.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- At all times relevant, Plaintiff was an individual residing within the State of 13. California.
- Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that at all times relevant Defendant conducted business in the State of California.
- Plaintiff is a "consumer" as that term is defined pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 15. 1679b(1).
- Plaintiff is informed by a representative of Defendant, and believes, and 16. thereon alleges, that Defendant is a "credit repair organization" as defined pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679b(3).
- Defendant is a company that holds itself out as someone "dedicated to helping 17. the general public to [sic] stop creditors and the credit bureaus from reporting inaccurate or untrue information on their credit reports."

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- Defendant claims that its "Main objective is to help our clients get the credit 18. rating they deserve."
- Defendant attempts to distinguish it from "other credit repair services" 19. because they "attack the negative credit using more effective angle."
- Sometime before January 1, 2004, Plaintiff began to have what he felt were 20. problems with numerous unwanted credit data on his consumer credit report. 1
- In an effort to have this unwanted credit data removed, Plaintiff telephoned 21. Defendant, who claimed great success in removing unwanted credit data from the person's consumer credit reports and repairing their credit.
- In this telephone conversation, Defendant's representative, Ernesto Rodriquez 22. ("Rodriquez"), represented himself as a "CIA Agent."
- In this telephone conversation, Rodriquez stated that his company had a 23. "close relationship with the credit bureaus" and stated that he "guaranteed" he could eliminate the unwanted credit information, accurate or not, currently on Plaintiff's consumer credit report.
- This statement was untrue and misleading and in violation of 15 U.S.C. §§ 24. 1679c(a)(1) and 1679c(a)(3), and 1679c(a)(4).
- In this telephone conversation, Rodriquez went on to state that the way his 25. company eliminated the unwanted credit information was by mailing the three major credit-reporting agencies² a dispute every month for a year until the credit-reporting agencies got tired of it and took off the unwanted credit information, whether that information was accurate or not.
- This statement was untrue and misleading and in violation of 15 U.S.C. §§ 26. 1679c(a)(1) and 1679c(a)(3), and 1679c(a)(4).

As that term is define pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq., (FCRA)

² Presumably, TransUnion, Experian and Equifax.

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- In this telephone conversation, Rodriquez stated that once Defendant began 27. sending these letters to the major credit reporting-agencies, unwanted credit information would "come off automatically."
- This statement was untrue and misleading and in violation of 15 U.S.C. §§ 28. 1679c(a)(1) and 1679c(a)(3), and 1679c(a)(4).
- In this telephone conversation, Rodriguez stated that his company normally 29. charged \$1,500.00 for this "service," but that if Plaintiff would mail in \$1,200.00, Defendant would provide this "service" for the next year.
- In this telephone conversation, Rodriquez stated that because Defendant had 30. such a close relationship and "clout" with the three major credit-reporting agencies, these credit-reporting agencies would usually just delete any unwanted credit information and that 85% of this unwanted credit information would be deleted "immediately," thereby improving Plaintiff's credit.
- This statement was untrue and misleading and in violation of 15 U.S.C. §§ 31. 1679c(a)(1) and 1679c(a)(3), and 1679c(a)(4).
- Plaintiff agreed and sent Defendant a cashier's check for the demanded 32. \$1,200.00, which Defendant accepted, immediately.
- By charging or receiving money or other valuable consideration for the performance of a service that the Defendant agreed to perform for Plaintiff but was not fully performed, Defendant violated the Credit Repair Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679(c)(b).
- Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendant 34. "opened" his account on or about December 18, 2004.
- Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that subsequently, 35. Defendant made minimal efforts to follow through on the promises made by Rodriquez and Defendant, and failed to perform as agreed.

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- Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that whatever efforts **36**. made by Defendant were unsuccessful and took place during only a fourmonth period of time.
- Subsequently, because Plaintiff believed he had been lied to and defrauded, 37. Plaintiff requested a refund from Defendant, but this was refused.
- Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679d, Defendant was under an obligation to provide 38. Plaintiff with a certain written statement before any contract or agreement between the Plaintiff and Defendant was executed that provided "You have the right to cancel your contract with any credit repair organization for any reason within 3 business days from the date you signed it." Defendant failed to do so, in violation of the CROA. Because this contract was not in compliance with the CROA, this contract is void and any payments made by Plaintiff to Defendant must be returned.
- Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679d, Defendant was under an obligation to provide 39. Plaintiff with a certain written statement before any contract or agreement between the Plaintiff and Defendant was executed that provided "The Federal Trade Commission regulates credit bureaus and credit repair organizations. For more information contact: The Public Reference Branch, Federal Trade Commission Washington, D.C. 20580" Defendant failed to do so, in violation of the CROA.
- Defendant provided services for Plaintiff without a written and dated contract 40. as required pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679e(a)(1), in violation of the CROA. Because this contract was not in compliance with the CROA, this contract is void and any payments made by Plaintiff to Defendant must be returned.
- Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679f, Defendant was under an obligation to provide 41. Plaintiff with a form, in duplicate, which stated, "You may cancel this contract, without any penalty or obligation, at any time before midnight of the 3rd day which begins after the date the contract is signed by you." Defendant

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failed to do so, in violation of the CROA. Because this contract was not in compliance with the CROA, this contract is void and any payments made by Plaintiff to Defendant must be returned.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

VIOLATIONS OF THE CREDIT REPAIR ORGANIZATION ACT, 15 U.S.C. § 1679 ET. SEQ.

- 42. GEFFE, on behalf of himself and members of the **Class** and the general public, re-alleges and incorporates herein each and every allegation set forth above as though fully set forth herein.
- 43. Plaintiff defines the Class as (i) all persons with addresses within the United States (ii) who Defendant charged, or from which Defendant received, money or other valuable consideration for the performance of a service that the Defendant agreed to perform for said persons but was not yet fully performed at that time as prohibited in 15 U.S.C. § 1679(c)(b). For purposes of this First Claim for Relief, the class period is five years prior to the filing of this Complaint.
- 44. The foregoing acts and omissions constitute numerous and multiple violations of the Credit Repair Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679 et. seq., including but not limited to each and every one of the above-cited provisions of the Credit Repair Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679 et. seq.

Numerosity of the Class

45. Each of the proposed classes are so numerous that the individual joinder of all its members in one action is impracticable. The exact number and the identities of class members are unknown at this time and can only be ascertained through appropriate investigation and discovery. The class consists of thousands of persons, as defendant admits on its company web site at "http://www.cia-credit.org/aboutcia.php/".

Existence and Predominance of Common Questions of Law and Fact

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- Common questions of law and fact arising out of the claims here at issue exist 46. as to all members of the Class and predominate over any individual issues. These common legal and factual questions include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Whether defendant violated this state's consumer protection statutes. 47.
- Whether the charging or receiving of money or other valuable consideration 48. for the performance of a service that the Defendant agreed to perform for Plaintiffs but was not fully performed, violates the Credit Repair Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679(c)(b).
- The amount of revenues and profits Defendant CIA received and/or the 49. amount of monies or other obligations imposed on or lost by class members as a result of such wrongdoing.
- Whether class members are entitled to payment of actual, incidental, 50. consequential, exemplary, punitive, and/or statutory damages plus interest thereon, and if so, what is the nature of such relief.

Typicality of Claims

Plaintiff GEFFE's claims are typical of the claims of members of the Class. 51. GEFFE was charged money or other valuable consideration for the performance of a service, and Defendant CIA received that money or other valuable consideration for the performance of a service prior to Defendant CIA performing any services. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that all members of all classes sustained the same treatment.

Adequate Representation

- Plaintiff GEFFE will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the 52. members of the Classes in that he has no irreconcilable conflicts with or interests materially antagonistic to those of the other class members.
- Rincon has retained attorneys experienced in the prosecution of class actions, 53. including consumer class actions.

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Superiority and Substantial Benefits of Class Litigation

- To the extent it is an element for establishing class certification for certain 54. causes of action, a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient group-wide adjudication of this controversy and, as applicable, possesses substantial benefits. Individual joinder of all members of the classes are impracticable, and no other group method of adjudication of all claims asserted herein is more efficient and manageable while at the same time providing all the remedies available to ensure the full purpose of this state's consumer protection laws are effectuated.
- Furthermore, as the damages suffered by each individual member of the 55. classes may be relatively small and the relief sought discrete, the expense and burden of individual litigation in order to obtain such relief would make it difficult or impossible for individual members of the class to redress the wrongs done to them, and the cost to the court system of adjudicating such litigation on an individual basis would be substantial. The class members, because of the amounts at stake, would have little interest in individually controlling the prosecution of separate actions; to counsel's knowledge there has not been any substantial litigation concerning this controversy commenced against the parties; and it is not anticipated that there will be any difficulties in the management of this litigation due to the focus of the wrongdoing on defendant's conduct and their knowledge of the true facts.
- Individualized litigation would also present the potential for varying, 56. inconsistent, or contradictory judgments and would magnify the delay and expense to all parties and to the court system resulting from multiple trials of the same factual issues. The conduct of this action as a class action presents fewer management difficulties, conserves the resources of the parties and the court system, and protects the rights of each class member as compared to other methods for the group-wide adjudication of this controversy. Thus, both

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the Class and the court system achieve substantial benefits by the prosecution
of this action on a class-wide basis by avoiding the burden of multiple
litigation involving identical claims, as well as by aiding legitimate business
enterprises in curtailing illegitimate competition and ensuring a therapeutic
effect on those companies such as Defendant CIA that indulge in illegal
practices. As a result of each and every violation of the Credit Repair
Organization Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679 et. seq., Plaintiff is entitled to any actual
damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679h(a)(1); punitive damages pursuant to
15 U.S.C. § 1679h(a)(2); and, reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to
15 U.S.C. § 1679h(a)(3), from each Defendant.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against Defendant for:

CREDIT REPAIR ORGANIZATION ACT, 15 U.S.C. § 1679 ET. SEQ.

- an award of actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679h(a)(1); 58.
- an award of punitive damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1679h(a)(2); 59.
- an award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, pursuant to 15 60. U.S.C. § 1679h(a)(3).
- For such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper under the 61. circumstances.

TRIAL BY JURY

Pursuant to the seventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States of 62. America, Plaintiff is entitled to, and demands, a trial by jury.

Respectfully submitted, HYDE & SWIGART

Røbert L. Hyde, Esq Attorney for Plaintig

Respectfully submitted, LAW OFFICES OF **DOUGLAS J. CAMPION**

Douglas J. Campion, Esq. Attorney for Plaintiff

Dated: 7/08

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SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

150270 \$350-B 04/29/08

DATE 04/24/2008

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO DIVISION

150270 - MB

April 29. 2008 10:27:28

Civ Fil Non-Pris

USAO #.: 08CV0770 CIVIL FILING

Judge..: JANIS L. SAMMARTINO

Amount.:

\$350.00 CK

Check#.: BC2375

Total-> \$350.00

FROM: TIMUR GEFFE VS

CREDIT INVESTIGATION AND

ARBITRATION